

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 088701

FOLLOWING REPEAT KARACHI 1865 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ISLAMABAD
LAHORE 20 APR 77

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L KARACHI 1865

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PINT, PK

SUBJECT: SECURITY SITUATION IN KARACHI

1. THE PAKISTAN LABOR ALLIANCE HAS CALLED A NATION-WIDE
STRIKE OF INDEFINITE DURATION BEGINNING APRIL 20 IN SUPPORT
OF PNA DEMANDS. THE PNA HAS ENDORSED THE STRIKE.
KNOWN AS "WHEEL JAMMER," CONNOTING THE INTENTION TO
STOP ALL WHEELS FROM TURNING, THE STRIKE IN KARACHI
IS ALMOST COMPLETELY EFFECTIVE AND IS BEING ENFORCED BY
MOBS ERECTING BARRICADES, THROWING STONES AT PASSING
VEHICLES AND EVEN BLOCKING BICYCLE TRAFFIC. AS OF MID-
MORNING THE DRIGH ROAD ROUTE TO THE AIRPORT CANNOT BE
SAFELY NEGOTIATED BECAUSE OF TRASH IN THE ROAD AND MOBS
AT SEVERAL POINTS. MEDICAL PERSONNEL, ELECTRICITY, GAS,
TELEPHONES, POSTAL SERVICE AND NEWS MEDIA ARE SUPPOSED
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PAGE 02 STATE 088701

TO BE EXEMPTED FROM THE STRIKE. THE PHONE AND
ELECTRIC UTILITIES ARE FUNCTIONING BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT
THEIR SERVICE PERSONNEL HAVE NOT REPORTED FOR WORK.

2. SCATTERED ATTEMPTS BY ARMY UNITS TO DISMANTLE
BARRICADES AND TO CALM CROWDS HAVE BEEN
OBSERVED, BUT GENERALLY SPEAKING NEITHER THE POLICE

NOR THE ARMY HAVE YET TAKEN ANY SIGNIFICANT STEPS TO CLEAR THE ROADS OR PREVENT MOB INTERFERENCE WITH THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC. THEY SEEM TO BE AVOIDING PROVOCATIVE CONTACT. SHOPS ARE CLOSED AND ATTENDANCE AT OFFICES AND FACTORIES SPARSE. FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES THE PORT IS NOT FUNCTIONING, PARTLY BECAUSE OF ABSENTEEISM AND PARTLY BECAUSE THE TRUCKERS ARE NOT MOVING GOODS UP COUNTRY.

3. PIA COCKPIT PERSONNEL ARE STILL ENGAGED IN "NON COOPERATION," IN EFFECT A STRIKE THAT HAS HALTED THE GREAT MAJORITY OF PIA FLIGHTS. AS OF NOW THE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS OF OTHER AIRLINES ARE STILL OPERATING BUT CANCELLATIONS AND OVER-FLIGHTS ARE LIKELY LATER IN THE DAY UNLESS DRIGH ROAD IS CLEARED TO PERMIT PASSENGERS AND AIRLINE PERSONNEL TO REACH THE AIRPORT.

4. THE PPP HAS SCHEDULED TWO PROCESSIONS FOR APRIL 20. ONE IS A PROCESSION OF "FISHERMEN AND PEASANTS" TO BE LED BY SEVERAL SIND PARTY LEADERS THROUGH MALIR AND KORANGI. THE OTHER IS A PROCESSION OF PRO-PPP STUDENTS ROUTED THROUGH MAHOODABAD. THE SEVERAL PNA PROCESSIONS SCHEDULED FOR TODAY DO NOT APPEAR TO BE ROUTED SO AS TO PRECIPITATE DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE PPP PROCESSIONS BUT THE POTENTIAL FOR INTER-PARTY CLASHES IS EVIDENT. MOORE
UNQUOTE VANCE

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